

about me and about the work of our committee. He has been a very valuable tutor, friend, and companion during the work of our Committee on Appropriations since I have been on the committee, since January of 1981. I have learned a lot from him. I have learned to respect him in terms of the conscientious way he goes about carrying out his responsibilities to the people of West Virginia and also to the people of the United States as a U.S. Senator. We can all study his career and his dedication to public service with great profit for our own interests. We can be guided by his example and be very proud of our work product if we do.

Mr. President, at the appropriate time, I will ask unanimous consent that the committee amendment be agreed to and the bill as thus amended be considered as original text for the purpose of further amendment, and that no points of order be waived by the request. I give the Senate notice that I will make that unanimous consent request in due course, and it probably will occur immediately after our break for the policy luncheons of the respective parties of the Senate. I am happy to yield to any other Senator who wishes to make any comments. I understand the Senator from Minnesota would like to speak as if in morning business, and I yield the floor.

Mr. COLEMAN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to speak as in morning business for up to 10 minutes.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

(The remarks of Mr. COLEMAN pertaining to the submission of S. Res. 442 are located in today's RECORD under "Submission of Concurrent and Senate Resolutions.")

Mr. COLEMAN. I yield the floor.

RECESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the hour of 12:30 p.m. having arrived, the Senate stands in recess until 2:15 p.m.

Thereupon, the Senate, at 12:34 p.m., recessed until 2:17 p.m. and reassembled when called to order by the Presiding Officer (Mr. VOINOVICH).

MAKING EMERGENCY SUPPLEMENTAL APPROPRIATIONS FOR THE FISCAL YEAR ENDING SEPTEMBER 30, 2006—Continued

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from New Hampshire is recognized.

AMENDMENT NO. 3594

Mr. GREGG. Mr. President, we are now on the supplemental appropriations bill. One of the issues raised in the supplemental appropriations bill, of course, is national defense. The purpose of this bill is primarily to fund efforts to fight terrorism and especially to make sure that our troops in Iraq and in Afghanistan have what they

need in order to effectively fight terrorism. A big part, however, of national defense is clearly border security—being sure that we know who comes into this country, know what their purposes are when they come into this country, and whether they are coming into this country for the purpose of visiting us or maybe participating in our economy or for the purpose of doing us harm.

Unfortunately, we have for a number of years experienced borders which are very porous. That is a function of our history—where we have always believed in open borders, especially with our neighbors to the north and to the south.

That has been one of our great attitudes as a nation—that we are an inviting nation, and we have always felt strongly that we should have reasonably open borders. But in the post-9/11 world—and especially in light of the dramatic number of people who have been coming into our country illegally—we can no longer tolerate that approach, unfortunately. We need to put more aggressive effort into making sure that we know who is coming over the borders and limiting those folks coming over our borders to people who want to come in here legally and who do not want to do us harm.

As a result of that, we have undertaken for the last couple of years an aggressive effort to significantly increase the number and the effort of our Border Patrol agencies—Customs, Border Patrol, Coast Guard, and ICE. In fact, over the last 1½ years we have dramatically increased funding for all of these different agencies. This chart lists those types of increases in those prior supplementals and in the last appropriations bill relative to border security. We increased Border Patrol agents by 1,500. That is a lot. That is an increase of over 10 percent in agents, an increase in detention officers by 650 officers, investigators, and detention beds—again, by almost 10 percent.

This is a significant ramping up of the number of, for lack of a better word, boots on the ground on our border—especially on our southern border. That is exactly what we needed to do. In fact, as we move into the outyears, the administration—the President specifically—has made a strong commitment to try to continue this increase in our border security.

This chart reflects how many agents we intend to add every year so that we can make sure we have the necessary personnel on the border in order to make sure that we can limit dramatically—in fact, basically stop—illegal immigration into this country, especially along the southern border.

The reason we have added 1,500 agents so far—and we intend to add another 1,500 or 2,000—and the reason we are not adding more every year is because the infrastructure can't handle any more, to be honest with you. We can't train more, and we actually can't

find more agents. In many instances, people who qualify—I have forgotten the numbers. I think it is something like 30,000 or 40,000 applications that we have to go through in order to get down to 1,500 agents.

It is actually hard to become a Border Patrol agent from a percentage standpoint of the number of people applying for the job versus the number of people who actually end up getting the job. It is harder to become a Border Patrol agent than it is to get into Harvard. That is because Border Patrol agents require special skills. They are talented people. And the type of folks we want to draw into this responsibility are people who have to have a tremendous amount of ability and expertise, and they are very hard to find. But they are good people, and we are adding to them dramatically.

We intend to get the Border Patrol up to 20,000 agents and an increase of detention beds of another 10,000. We will be literally able to control the southern border. We will no longer have this issue of people coming cross the southern border in waves illegally. Literally, we can stop that. We can do it, and we intend to do it. There is no issue about this. We intend to do this. However, we have found in ramping up the number of Border Patrol agents they have run into a fairly significant problem.

As an aside, I note that the only reason we have been able to increase these Border Patrol agents so dramatically is because Senator COCHRAN, as chairman of the full Appropriations Committee, has allowed the subcommittee, which I chair—the Homeland Security Subcommittee—to get special allocations in order to fund those.

It has really been out of his courtesy, his energy, and the support of Senator FRIST in this effort that we have been successful in basically increasing these numbers. We are on this path of basically being able to have enough boots on the ground in the Border Patrol area and Customs area and ICE area in order to adequately control the border.

What we found going through this process of expanding dramatically Border Patrol agents and Customs and ICE agents is that the infrastructure to support these people isn't there. They are driving old cars. For the most part they are flying helicopters which are 20 years over their useful life. Customs is actually flying airplanes that are 20, 30, or 40 years over their useful life. In fact, just recently the Customs agency was forced to basically ground all its Customs planes for a brief period of time, and the P-3 fleet, which is 40 years old, because these types of cracks developed in their wings. They obviously couldn't fly them. So they had to repair all of them—or not all but those that had this potential type of stress.

We have a very old fleet of aircraft. They are not able to do the job.

Equally important, in the technology area where we really should be more aggressive and where we really have